

Subject: Bolin Confederatio coppers

Howland, Henry R.

1926-1927

[Buffalo, NY]



GENERAL OFFICES
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Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

Buffalo, New York, U. S. A.

October,
4th,
1926.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
American Numismatic Society,
155th Street and Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Wood:

I remember with pleasure the privilege I had of meeting you in May when I visited your rooms with my friend Mr. Bingham of our Buffalo Historical Society, and relying upon your good nature, venture to apply to you for a little information.

When I was a boy I was interested in making a collection of early American coins and among the coppers which I then obtained, in hunting over a batch that had been in circulation at some grocery store, I found one regarding which I wish to inquire. On the obverse is the inscription "Confederatio 1785"--on the reverse the inscription "Americana Inimica Tyrannus". It is in fairly good condition altho the indentations on the margins are somewhat worn off. Scott in his coin book of 1890 describes this coin without attempting to give any price or whether it was offered for sale.

Would you very kindly look this up for me and tell me whether you have any knowledge of them and if you could find anything regarding them. I take it that they are very rare, in fact some one has told me that there were only a few struck off. I would very greatly appreciate any information that you could give me and am,

Very sincerely yours,

Henry R. Howland

D.

See

October 7th, 1926

Henry R. Howland, Esq.
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences
Buffalo, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Howland:

Replying to your letter of October 4th, the Americana Inimica Tyrannis is a very rare coin. It is very doubtful if more than a half-dozen are known. I have seen no recent quotations on this piece, but one - and in possibly better condition than yours - brought Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800.00) several years ago.

If you really desire a valuation on this coin, I would suggest your sending it to either Mr. Wayte Raymond, 489 Park Avenue, New York, or Mr. Henry Chapman, 333 South 16th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., to see what they would offer you for it.

Very truly yours,

Cura tor



Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

Buffalo, New York, U. S. A.

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November,
15th,
1926.

Mr. Howland Wood,
American Numismatic Society,
150th Street and Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Wood:

Wayte Raymond to whom you referred me writes me that in your opinion as in his own my coin with Americana Inimica Tyrannus is a copy of a counterfeit made by J. A. Bolen from Springfield Mass. about 1863. I would have said as I did in writing to him that I found it in hunting over some old coppers in 1959 or 1860 but it may have been as late as the spring of 1863 for immediately after that I went off to join the army and it could not have been found by me any later than the time mentioned.

I write to ask if you will do me the courtesy to give me any information you can regarding this Mr. J. A. Bolen, who he was, and what he did. Is there any printed account of his forgeries or reproductions.

I would greatly appreciate the favor of a line from you giving me as much detailed information as you can concerning him. You will doubtless remember my pleasant visit with you last May when I came to your office with my friend Mr. R. W. Bingham of the Buffalo Historical Society, of which I am one of the Board of Managers.

Very sincerely yours,

Henry R. Arnold

To Mr. Wayte Raymond a coin dealer.

November 22, 1926

Mr. Henry R. Howland,
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences,
Buffalo, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Howland:

Mr. Raymond and I studied your coin very carefully and compared it with authentic Bolen pieces so that there was no doubt in our minds that it is a Bolen fabrication. It looked to me especially as if it were struck from a Bolen die in the earlier stages, as the Bolen pieces we examined showed on the obverse the die worked up a trifle more than on your piece, but it showed clearly it was from the same die.

An account of these pieces was published in 1882 by Edwin T. Johnson, and he states that Bolen put these pieces on the market in 1863. As your piece is a product of the die before entirely finished, it might have gotten out a trifle earlier.

James A. Bolen was a die-maker in Springfield, Mass., and made a number of medals for parties in Springfield, Boston, and for himself. He apparently was a coin collector as well, as he made a dozen or more dies of rare Colonial coins, all of them very well done, but as specimens of all his work are on record, it is easy to tell Bolens from the genuine ones.

Mr. Henry Chapman the other day informed me that you had sent the piece on to him and that he stated it was a Bolen.

Very truly yours,

Curator



Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences

Buffalo, New York, U. S. A.

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December 6, 1926.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
American Numismatic Society,
155th Street and Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Wood:

I should have written you much sooner to acknowledge the receipt of your recent kind letter and to thank you for the same and for the trouble that you took in examining the coin which I sent to Mr. Wayte Raymond for examination. I am quite willing to accept your judgment regarding it but it must have been struck from the die you mention, perhaps before the die was fully completed in 1863, for at that time I had joined the Army and it had been obtained by me from a lot of old coppers prior to that time.

Mr. Lyman Low in his article in the Numismatic Journal for 1892 states as I recall it that the original dies were made in Birmingham and intimates that there were more than two varieties. Would you very kindly tell me in what publication I could find the article referred to in your letter written by Edwin F. Johnson in 1882. Have you that article in the Library of your Society.

Mr. Henry Chapman to whom you also referred me was not so gracious or kindly in his correspondence as you, having been extremely curt and ungracious. He sent me the rubbing of what he claimed to be the genuine specimen of the originals for which he charged me two dollars. I paid him and thanked him but Mr. Bingham and myself in comparing the rubbing with the excellent photograph of the genuine coin in Crosby's early American Coins, find that the rubbing does not compare fully with the photograph. In spite of Mr. Chapman's rather petulant "I have been in business for fifty years and I know I am talking about" it occurs to me that perhaps there is a good deal yet to be learned about some of the items in our early colonial coinage but I am grateful to you for your courtesy and consideration.

D.

Very sincerely yours,

Harry R. Howland

February 28, 1927

Mr. Henry R. Howland,
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences,
Buffalo, N. Y.;

Dear Sir:

In filing away some correspondence today I came across your letter of December 6th. This had apparently got caught between some other letters and I cannot find that I have ever answered it, though I made notations on the back in order to answer. With this explanation, please pardon this negligence on our part.

We have both of the pamphlets concerning the Bolin medals in our library and herewith is a transcript from these. I trust this gives you the information you desire.

"J. A. Bolin's Medals, cards, and Fac-Similes by Edwin L. Johnson.

Numismatic Printing and Binding Co., Springfield, Mass. 1882

7. Fac-simile of Confederatio cent.

2 silver 40 copper

8. Fac-simile of Confederatio cent.

Similar to No. 7 but with smaller stars and rays on reverse.

Cut in 1863. Dies destroyed.

2 silver 40 copper.

An Accurate and Descriptive Catalog of the Medals, etc. made by J. A. Bolin.

Providence Albert L. Stevens 1905.

Same information as above."

Very truly yours,



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Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences
Buffalo, New York, U. S. A.

March,
1st,
1927.

Mr. Howland Wood,
American Numismatic Society,
Broadway at 156th Streets,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Wood:

Please accept my very cordial thanks
for your letter of the 28th regarding the Bolin Con-
federatio coppers.

Very sincerely yours,

Howy B. Howland

HRH:S